

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 215857
ORIGIN OC-06

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 ISO-00 /007 R

66011

DRAFTED BY OC/P:CLOVETT:JF
APPROVED BY A/OC:WENAEHER
OC/P:JVANDIVIER
OC/P:EBFENSTERMACHER

-----022710 090152Z /66

P 090048Z SEP 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT PRIORITY 4151

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FOR FRDCO

FOLLOWING REPEAT LUSAKA 2708 ACTION SECSTATE 07 SEP 77

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LUSAKA 2708

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PDEV PORG RH ZA

SUBJECT: BLACKOUT AND CURFEW EXTENDED

REF: LUSAKA 2678 AND 2680

1. THE BLACKOUT

AND CURFEW ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO END

SEPTEMBER 7 HAS BEEN EXTENDED FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD OF
TIME. THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBIA ANNOUNCED THE EXTENSION
BECAUSE OF THE "WAR SITUATION EXISTING IN THIS PART OF
AFRICA".

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2. THE CONDITIONS OF THE CURFEW HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED

SLIGHTLY TO PERMIT LIGHTS TO BE USED AS LONG AS NO
LIGHT SHOWS OUTSIDE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECOMMENDED HEAVY
DRAPES TO PREVENT LIGHT FROM BEING SEEN.

3. THE BLACKOUT HAS ALREADY CAUSED ANY NUMBER OF PROBLEMS.

THE FIRST THREE NIGHTS THE GOVERNMENT CUT THE ENTIRE POWER SUPPLY IN LUSAKA. AS A RESULT, THERE WERE MANY EQUIPMENT BREAKDOWNS, INCLUDING WATER PUMPS AND GENERATORS. LARGE AREAS OF THE CITY WERE WITHOUT WATER FOR TWO DAYS BEFORE THE DAMAGE COULD BE REPAIRED. THERE ARE REPORTS OF DAMAGE TO MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AT NAKUMBALA SUGAR ESTATES. ANOTHER REPORT INDICATES THAT SEVERAL THOUSAND BABY CHICKS DIED BECAUSE THE INCUBATORS WENT OFF WHEN THE POWER WAS CUT. PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF COMPLAINTS, THE POWER REMAINED ON DURING MOST OF THE FOURTH NIGHT OF THE BLACKOUT.

4. THE CURFEW IS ALSO CAUSING SOME PROBLEMS. THERE WERE PUBLIC APPEALS FOR THE POLICE NOT TO BEAT CURFEW VIOLATORS BUT SIMPLY TO ARREST THEM AND TAKE THEM TO JAIL. A NUMBER OF REPORTS HAD BEEN RECEIVED CONCERNING BEATINGS BEING METED OUT TO THOSE FOUND ON THE STREETS AFTER EIGHT PM. ON THE OTHER HAND, OTHER REPORTS INDICATE THAT MANY CURFEW VIOLATORS ARE SIMPLY ARRESTED WITHOUT VIOLENCE, PLACED IN JAIL OVERNIGHT AND RELEASED WITHOUT CHARGE.

5. COMMENT: THERE SEEMS TO BE A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF ZAMBIANS AND EXPATRIATES AS WELL TO ABIDE BY THE CURFEW AND BLACKOUT REGULATIONS. HOWEVER, THE REGULATIONS WERE EXPECTED TO BE IN EFFECT FOR ONLY FOUR NIGHTS AND NOW THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EXTENDED FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD THE NOVELTY MAY SOON WEAR THIN AND COMPLIANCE MAY BECOME MORE OF A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BURDEN. MEANWHILE, SPECULATION CONTINUES AS TO WHY THE BLACKOUT AND CURFEW HAVE BEEN IMPOSED AND WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPTTEL.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: IN VIEW OF CURFEW AFTER 8 PM LOCA TIME, EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT LIMIT NIACT TELEGRAMS TO ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL MESSAGES ONLY. LOW UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL SECURITY, AIR DEFENSE, CURFEW
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE215857
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: CLOVETT:JF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770326-0460
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770980/aaaacpnw.tel
Line Count: 102
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9f3c9849-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN OC
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LUSAKA 2678
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1329702
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BLACKOUT AND CURFEW EXTENDED
TAGS: PDEV, PORG, PINS, RH, ZA
To: FRANKFURT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9f3c9849-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009